OFFICE OF THE MINISTER

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE DEMOLITIONS OF STRUCTURES IN KATIMA MULILO TOWN COUNCIL

BY

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly,
Honourable Deputy Speaker,
Honourable Members,

I seize this opportunity to comment on the recent demolitions of structures by Council in Katima Mulilo Town. It is my responsibility as a Sector Minister to provide clarity to this August House and to the public at large as to what transpired as far as this incident is concerned.

Honourable Speaker,
Honourable Members,

On the 8\textsuperscript{th} October 2017, I travelled to the Zambezi Region to gain first hand insight of what has transpired in the region. I had a meeting with the Regional and Local Leadership on Monday, the 9\textsuperscript{th} October 2017, and the subject of the meeting was the demolition of structures by the Katima Mulilo Town Council. The meeting was held in good spirit.

I was informed that illegal land occupancy is prevalent in Katima Mulilo. The Council unfortunately concedes that in this particular incident, they neglected to obtain a Court Order to the effect; however, I was further informed that the illegal occupants of the subject town lands were engaged by the Council prior to the actions of the Council, but they were uncooperative. The
decision taken by Council to demolish the illegal structures was taken as a last resort in an effort to restore law and order.

Honourable Speaker,
Honourable Members,

I was informed that the land grabbers are in four categories, namely:

1. People who officially acquired plots in Katima Mulilo and sold them;

2. Civil servants and other private sector employees who own houses but rather opt to rent them out and opted to go grab land;

3. People who have migrated from villages and other towns; and

4. Foreign immigrants from neighboring countries.

The meeting held in Katima Mulilo with the Regional and Local Leadership as leaders of the subnational governments concluded as follows:

• The leadership is in agreement that the land grabbing should be stopped and prevented. The people need to adhere to the laws of the country;

• Council should hold community meetings in various suburbs to engage the people and explain the procedures and
processes that must be followed including sharing information on the boundaries of the town;

- Katima Mulilo Town Council must create a Reception Centre similar to the one in Eenhana Town, to settle those people migrating to the town. As their income improve and depending on the availability of serviced land, Council can then allocate plots to them, following procedures and based on their income and affordability.

- The most important conclusion reached during the meeting was that council suspends the current operations of demolishing the illegal structures pending interim measures.

Honourable Speaker,

The town council has entered into six (6) Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) to service land and provide shelter. However, the land earmarked for these PPPs is illegally occupied by the land grabbers. The community should allow Council to implement these projects as this will lead to the provision of affordable serviced and habitable land.

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members,
In conclusion, it is common knowledge in the Zambezi Region and in the country at large that any piece of land, whether in town or in the villages, is acquired through the relevant authorities (Traditional or Local Authorities), and in accordance with the relevant legislations. While I am fully sympathetic with the people affected by the demolitions of structures, I strongly believe that we need to cooperate and adhere to our laws. This will enable us all to live in harmony as a nation.

Honourable Speaker,
Honourable Members,

The situation is now being politicized and the following should be clarified:

1. The picture circulating of a bulldozer set alight is not true;
2. The picture of a woman injured on her face being circulated is not true; and
3. The rumors that a child lost his/her life during the demolition process are false.

These are all false and fictitious stories created to cause anxiety and discontent among the society.

While expressing my sympathy with the affected people, at this juncture, I am requesting this August House to allow the concerned Town Council time to respond to the letters received from the lawyers and other organisations. I thank you!